

## ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS REGARDING RFP # 1616VF: FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION SERVICES

*Questions submitted via e-mail and in person at the Bidder's Conference on May 5, 2016*

QUESTION		ANSWER
1.	Is there an incumbent for this bid?	Yes. The current contract holder is the International Institute of Buffalo.
2.	What rates does the incumbent charge?	The International Institute charges ECDSS \$42 per hour, minimum 2 hours. We do utilize some interpreters for multiple clients on the same day, and pay by the hour, not the client. Premium rates apply for after-hours or emergency service.
3.	Does Erie County reimburse for interpreters' travel expenses, and if so, at what rate?	ECDSS expects that an interpreter's travel expense is built-in to the hourly rate. An exception may be made for a client in a remote location that required prolonged travel time, or an extremely rare language that requires an interpreter from out of town to travel to Buffalo. Most appointments are in downtown Buffalo, and most interpreters are also based in the City of Buffalo.
4.	Is there a provision for rush-turnaround pricing?	Yes. We currently pay a premium rate for less-than-24 hours' notice.
5.	Is there a provision for minimums?	Yes. It is standard for there to be a 2 hour minimum. However ECDSS does have a system of "Language Days" whereby multiple appointments of the same language are scheduled back-to-back, and the interpreter is paid by the hour, not by the client. The interpreter may be able to see 4 clients in the 2 hour window, and be paid for 2 hours.
6.	Can proposers submit separate rates for different languages? Pricing all languages the same may lead to higher prices for all languages.	Proposers may submit rate schedules in whatever format they choose. It will be up to the review committee to consider all aspects of a proposal, including rates, before choosing a winner.
7.	Does this RFP include American Sign Language?	No. There is a separate RFP for Interpretation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
8.	Can ECDSS list what languages are required, and in what volume?	The needs of ECDSS for language interpretation are constantly changing. We can look at past trends and try to anticipate what our needs will be. In 2015, the top 10 languages, with number of instances, were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arabic- 637</li> <li>2. Burmese- 442</li> <li>3. Nepali- 413</li> <li>4. Karen- 390</li> <li>5. Spanish- 146</li> <li>6. Swahili- 144</li> <li>7. Karenni- 136</li> <li>8. Tigrinya- 78</li> <li>9. French- 76</li> <li>10. May May- 71</li> </ol>
9.	Must a proposer be a non-profit agency? Can FOR-PROFIT companies apply?	For- profit agencies MAY apply for this opportunity.
10.	What is the reason for this RFP? i.e. poor performance, contract expiration, etc.	ECDSS issues RFPs on a 3-year (or 5 year) cycle. We are currently at the end of this cycle, and must put the service up for RFP again.